

which would have had the effect of decreasing the swallow's ground speed which probably assisted the egret's hunting method.

This behaviour has not been recorded previously by us either in Australia or elsewhere. It would be of interest to see if such active hunting methods become more common and widespread and to see if it is learned by other individuals.

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A blue-winged Pitta (*Pitta moluccensis*) in Western Australia

- On 6 November 1994 Mr John Cord of Karratha, found a live pitta on the loading jetty for Woodside Petroleum, on Burrup Peninsula, Western Australia. The bird was exhausted and had a slightly damaged wing. It was kept by Mr Cord in a small aviary for several days then air freighted to the Perth Zoo.

Details of the bird are as follows: weight 70 g; exposed culmen 23.6 mm; entire culmen 29.3 mm; wing 115 mm; tail 41 mm; tarsus 35.8 mm; middle toe and claw 32.7 mm; iris dark brown; orbital ring grey; bill greyish brown, paler on base of lower mandible; gape pinkish orange; legs pink. Upperparts: centre of crown black; broad eyebrow stripe buffy brown, the feathers with paler tips; lore, side of face and hindneck black; back and scapulars dull dark green; rump bright purplish blue; upperwing coverts bright purplish blue, some feathers with green tips; primaries and outer secondaries black with large white

patch in centre of wing; tail black with bluish green tip. Underparts: chin and throat white; neck, breast and flanks cinnamon buff to cinnamon rufous; centre of belly, vent and undertail coverts pinkish red; undertail black; underwing coverts blackish, rest of underwing dull grey with large white wing patch.

The Blue-winged Pitta breeds in eastern India, south-western China and South East Asia. On migration and in winter it ranges south and east to the Malay Peninsula, Sumatra, Java, Borneo, Sulawesi and the Philippines. MacKinnon and Phillips 1993 (*The Birds of Borneo, Sumatra, Java and Bali*) doubts the validity of the previous Australian records. There are however two other Western Australian specimens: one found dead on Mandora in November 1927 and another found dead near Derby about November 1930 (Serventy, D.L. 1968. *Bull. Brit. Orn. Cl.* 88: 160-162). The remains of one of these specimens is in the W.A. Museum. There is also a specimen in the University Museum of Zoology, Cambridge, collected on Christmas Island (Indian Ocean) on 14 December 1901.

Judging from these records it would appear that *Pitta moluccensis* is a rare non-breeding summer visitor to northern Australia from south-east Asia.

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